

COBRA STRIKE

VOL. I, ISSUE III

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READY AND FORWARD

COBRA BRIGADE'S

8-10 CAV

in Baghdad ... pg. 4



Combined Operations --pg.8



1AD joins BCT fight --pg.10



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COVER PHOTO: The Rough Riders of 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry patrol the streets of South Baghdad's Al Rasheed District in their M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams)



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COBRA⁶ on POINT

Over the past four months, we have seen significant improvement in the Cobra area of operations as a result of the diligent work and perseverance of the Soldiers from 1-12 Inf., 2-506 Inf., 8-10 Cav., 2-77 Field Artillery, 704th Support Bn., 4th Special Troops Bn. and our newest addition to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, Task Force 2-6 Inf.

Despite the large area for which the brigade is responsible, we have had great success conducting combat operations. There has been a decrease in attacks with the increase in the number of combined and Iraqi led operations. In the past three

months alone, we have completed over 200 missions involving raids and searches, along with over 3,200 combat patrols in central Baghdad.

Since January, we have patrolled and cleared over 6,600 miles of roadway. By keeping these routes clear of terrorists and improvised explosive devices, we allow greater freedom of movement for other crucial missions including security, essential services and governance.

The Cobra Brigade has been working alongside Iraqi security forces when conducting combat missions. During the 15 major combined operations involving the Soldiers of 4th Brigade and their Iraqi

counterparts, the level of success equal to or higher than what is seen when conducting solo operations. The Iraqi Army is showing that they are ready to take the lead due to the training that they received from the Military Integrated Transition Teams, which have been training the IA to secure their country.

Another main focus of the brigade concerns Essential Services. The Special Troops Battalion have overseen infrastructure projects worth more than \$5 million in Baghdad. These projects provide Iraqi citizens essential needs such as water, electricity, and sewage and garbage disposal.



Col. Michael F. Beech

I am proud of the enduring effort that our Soldiers have put forth in helping the Iraqi people build a more secure and prosperous country. We are winning here so we don't have to fight at home. I would also like to thank the dedication of our families and friends back home, and for all of the support which keeps us motivated and mission-oriented.

COBRA STRIKE!

F*R*O*M THE F*R*O*N*T

Greetings Cobras!

Years ago, when my kids were much younger than they are now, my wife had an emergency in the states. She traveled alone to attend to that emergency, and the boys and I were left alone for 10 days in Germany. At the time, I was a platoon sergeant so I thought it would be too much to run a 16-man platoon and come home and handle a First Grader and toddler so I took leave.

One day, after I had completed the first mission (dinner), I sat down with the kids and was preparing to eat dinner, and I looked and noticed that no one was eating. So I ask, "What's the problem?" Immediately, the First Grader replies, "Mom doesn't do it like this." Needless to say, I got that for the next ten days. Whether it was the way I prepared the food, washed the dishes or replaced things backed to where I thought they belong in our home, I was wrong, because I didn't do things the way mom did them. According to



Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Moody, Jr.

my children, mom did it right and that was the standard; and my oldest had taken it upon him to enforce mom's standard while she was gone.

You may have found that story amusing, but the truth of the matter is that we need standards in everything that we do. Without standards, how would we measure the proficiency of a task or test? What rules would we use to ensure uniformity of an organiza-

tion? The Army's standards are established and directed by the Department of the Army and local command policies. But standards mean nothing unless they are enforced! In the example above, my 6-year old was making sure that I adhered to mom's standard. In the Army, leaders make sure that Soldiers adhere to the Army's standards. Our business is a high-stake business. Anything less than enforcing strict adherence to a standard could be costly.

We can not afford to have a vehicle turn over and kill the gunner because the vehicle

commander didn't tell the driver to slow down, or the driver wasn't licensed properly. We can not afford for a vehicle to break down on a patrol because we didn't conduct the proper PMCS prior to going on the mission. We can not afford to be on mission and realize that we left our tow bar in the motor pool because we didn't do a pre-combat check or inspection prior to movement. And finally, we can not afford to take short cuts when clearing or loading our crew served weapons.

Whether its 0200 in the morning or 1400 in the afternoon, we have got to pay attention or someone's lapse in following a standard will be fatal. "Leaders" need to ensure that everyone is trained to standard on the crew served weapon that he/she is behind and that training needs to be validated every so often so as to maintain proficiency. In all of the examples above, if someone doesn't enforce the standard, it could cost someone's life. If you have been a strict enforcer, then I encourage you to continue. If not, then tighten it up a notch. We can't afford to have a lapse in a standard. Soldiers learn the standard. Leaders teach and enforce it.

Cobras!

ROUGH RIDERS

In

BAGHDAD



Story and photos by
U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

The Soldiers of 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, maintain security for Coalition Forces in central and southern Baghdad's Al Rasheed District. Their duty is to help the new Iraqi government and its security forces take responsibility for their nation's capital.

Lt. Col. Gian Gentile Working with Iraqi
Squadron Commander Security Forces to combat anti-Iraqi forces,

the Soldiers of 8-10 Cav. conduct combined patrols daily with Iraq's Ministry of Interior commandoes and Iraqi army soldiers. The combined forces patrol markets, residential areas and mosques in an effort to build trust and maintain security in the local communities.

"That is what I see as the beginning of trust between the Iraqi people and their security forces, and once we have a basic level of trust, I really believe that the ISF will be able to destroy the insurgents very quickly," said Lt. Col. Gian Gentile, squadron commander, 8-10 Cav., a native of Danville, Calif., who has more than 24 years of military service.

The Iraqi people, explained Gentile, will begin to recognize the legitimacy of the ISF once they feel that they have a security force that can fundamentally protect them from the AIF.

"I do believe that they are starting to see that ability in the ISF," Gentile said, "and that is what is going to produce, I think, peace and ultimately, the defeat of the insurgents."

Gentile recalled a recent event as an example of the challenges that lie ahead for Coalition and Iraqi Forces alike.

The Iraqi police, acting upon a tip from an Iraqi citizen that several homes in an area in South Baghdad were being used to build improvised-explosive devices, took hostile small-arms fire from a Sunni mosque in the area of the investigation, he explained. The Iraqi police returned fire. During the engagement, two officers were wounded, one seriously.

Soldiers from 8-10 Cav. responded to the Iraqi police's call for help, and a patrol in the area arrived on the scene to provide

Soldiers of the 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry conduct security assessments with local mosque leaders in South Baghdad. The commanders of 8-10 Cav. constantly touch base with the local imams of the mosques and citizens of Baghdad to ensure that their neighborhoods are secure. This method helps to build upon the local Iraqi communities' trust in their leaders, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces.

vide medical attention to the wounded police officers.

Privately hired local guards in civilian clothes in the Sunni mosque then opened fire on the American Soldiers.

"My Soldiers quickly, aggressively and accurately returned fire to those guards in the mosque, wounding one and killing another," Gentile said.

Immediately, U.S. Forces working with their Iraqi counterparts, assessed the situation and addressed those in the mosque, using the loudspeakers in their vehicles to call for a cease fire.

Arriving on the scene shortly afterward, the senior MOI commander on the ground and the squadron commander met with the leaders in the mosque to find a peaceful solution to the tense situation.

Gentile attributes the violence to a lack of trust between the Sunni men and the predominately Shiite security forces operating in Baghdad. Recent incidents of sectarian strife created by Shiite militias posing as Iraqi Security Forces and attacking Sunni mosques has contributed to the Iraqi public's distrust.

Despite, the random violence, Gentile said he believes the basic essentials of trust are being established between the Shias and the Sunnis in his area of operations. Since the event at the Sunni mosque, his area has been relatively quiet.

"What needs to start happening quickly, right away, and this what I tell the men who live in and work at city mosques," Gentile said, "the Iraqis cannot shoot at Iraqi Police, at MOI Commandoes, because they are the legitimate security forces of the government of Iraq.

"They have to acknowledge that and cannot shoot at MOI Forces. That is where we have to start at. That is the beginning" said Gentile.

*Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Rodriguez
Squadron Command Sergeant Major*



Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Rodriguez, 8-10 Cav., scans the rooftops of buildings in a neighborhood in South Baghdad where sniper activity has been reported. The cavalry scouts working on the ground with Iraqi Security Forces are helping the Iraqi Army, Commandoes and police forces to refine their tactics, techniques and operating procedures, helping the ISF to take the lead in security operations in Baghdad.



Lt. Col. Gian Gentile, squadron commander, 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, inspects Iraqi checkpoint operations in Southwest Baghdad. The Iraqi Security Forces working the checkpoint outside the Al Amariya Mulhalla, or neighborhood, are dealing with Anti-Iraqi Forces attempting to disrupt security in their area by using snipers and planting Improvised Explosive Devices in the local communities. U.S. and Iraqi Forces are working together in South and Central Baghdad, conducting combined patrols to maintain security for the communities and defeat AIF activity in Baghdad.

The ISF contribute a lot to the Rough Riders' current mission, said Command Sgt. Major Rafael Rodriguez, 8-10 Cav.

In fact it would be impossible without them, he explained.

"There is a hell of a lot more Iraqi soldiers than American Soldiers," said Rodriguez.

"I wouldn't compare them to American Soldiers; it takes a long time to get them to that level," he said. "They contribute a lot on the checkpoints. They are doing a lot of patrols. They are doing combined patrols with us daily."

Rodriguez acknowledges that when working in the Iraqi urban environment, the mission of his cavalry squadron is considerably different than that of the light reconnaissance role for the scouts of the U.S. Army's Units of Action.

However, he added, the Soldiers of 8-10 Cav. are well-trained, confident in their skills and the ability of their equipment, and dedicated to accomplishing their mission.

"The Soldiers know they have a job to do," Rodriguez said. "They know they are making a difference. Stuff that when people watch or read a newspaper, they don't see, but the Soldier on the ground, he sees.

"He sees the little kids smile. He sees the Iraqi people making change. They are out on the ground, touching the Iraqi public. People don't appreciate what the American Soldier is doing here because they are not on the ground."

As the cavalry scouts of 8-10 Cav. secure south and central Baghdad, they are also working to train and equip the Iraqi Army, he explained.

"I look back, and I remember the Iraqi army in (2003), and the IA now, they are about 200-percent better," Rodriguez said. "They got what soldiers do — somebody is in charge of them, telling them where to go, where to be, where to orient their weapons. Now they stand — they fight."

Recognizing the long work that lies ahead for U.S. and Iraqi forces, Rodriguez said he knows that his Soldiers will be successful in their mission.

"Maybe, at the strategic level, there are challenges," he said. "At the political level, there are challenges — but at the Soldiers' level, we just do what we are told and come back."

The Iraqi people tell his Soldiers that all is not perfect right now, the command sergeant major said, but the Iraqis also tell his Soldiers that it will get better.



SCOUTS OUT!



8-10 Cav takes on all encompassing mission in southern Baghdad

*Story and photos by
U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel*

The cavalry scout has been called the commander's eyes and ears on the battlefield.

Historically, their main responsibility has been to conduct reconnaissance operations to obtain combat information on the enemy and the area of operations for producing combat intelligence, but as today's battlefield constantly evolves, so does the scout.

A popular phrase within the ranks of the U.S. Army is "adapt and overcome," and that is exactly what Soldiers from 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division have done as they take on a wide array of missions in southern Baghdad.

"There are a lot of things involved in our job," said 1st Lt. Shawn Wiley, 2nd Platoon leader, Troop B, 8-10 Cav.

"Our primary mission is to conduct urban area (reconnaissance), but on any given day we have a responsibility to complete all kinds of missions," Wiley said, a native of Pine Bush, N.Y. The Rough Riders from 8-

10 Cav. have come a long way from the days of cavalry scout Advanced Individual Training at Fort Knox, Ky.

On today's battlefield in the harsh and dangerous environment of Iraq the 8-10 Cav. troopers are required to

with the local populous in the west Rasheed District in Southern Baghdad.

The Rough Riders are also responsible for clearing supply routes of Improvised Explosive Devices and must be able to remain ready to respond to any emergency in

and dismounted patrols, conduct raids, collect and act on intelligence, act as somewhat of a civil affairs team as they clear roads of Improvised Explosive Devices all while maintaining a Quick Reactionary Force status.

On a recent mission March 10, Troop B's 2nd Platoon of approximately 15 scouts conducted a joint patrol with Iraq's elite 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade Police Commando unit from the Iraq Ministry of the Interior.

This was the first joint patrol the platoon conducted with the Iraqi unit.

The scouts conducted a tight operation and the 40 strong Commando unit from 2-4 added excitement to the patrol.

The Commandos took control of the operation and were greeted by jubilant Iraqi citizens, a sign of the continuous improvement of the ISF.

"We have been trained very well by the Americans," said Pvt. Mohammed Rashad, 2-4 Commandos, during a patrol in a densely populated area in West Rasheed. "Our forces are ready for the mission 24 hours a day."



Soldiers from the 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division and Iraqi Police Commando conduct a joint patrol.

complete a handful of missions a scout from World War II would never even dream of.

Aside from urban area reconnaissance, Wiley and his men conduct lethal and non-lethal engagements, carry out strike operations on suspected insurgent strongholds, conduct raids and act somewhat as a civil affairs team all while maintaining good relationships

the battalion AO.

"A lot of the time we will respond to IEDs and other emergencies," said Spc. Max Mielke, cavalry scout, Troop B, 8-10 Cav., a native of Iowa Falls, Iowa.

"We have to always remain reactionary no matter what mission we do," he said. On a typical day Wiley and his troopers from 1st Platoon conduct mounted



1st Lt. Shawn Wiley, Troop B, 8th Squadron, 10 Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division talks with citizens of West Rasheed in Southern Baghdad during a routine patrol.

"I enjoy my job," the young Iraqi Commando said. "Everyday we are on the streets working to make this country better, and keeping our families and friends safe

in Baghdad."

The West Rasheed AO has seen fewer and fewer attacks each month and Wiley credits his unit as well as the ISF for prevent-

ing terrorist actions against the people living in the area.

As The Rough Rider Battalion continues to conduct an all-encompassing mission in southern

Baghdad, Wiley said he looks forward to conducting joint operations with ISF personnel as security conditions continue to improve in West Rasheed.



Soldiers from 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division conduct a routine patrol in the West Rasheed District in southern Baghdad.

COMBINED PATROLS

BUILD IRAQI SECURITY FORCES IN SOUTHERN BAGHDAD

Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Brian Anderson MNC-I PAO

Soldiers in the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division, along with the 4th BCT's MITT prepare for a cordon and search of the Al Amarryia neighborhood Sunday. The Iraqi Soldiers, observed by the MITT, confiscated chemical masks and protective suits and more than 50 AK-47 assault rifles with ammunition during the operation. The mission was a response to more than 30 attacks occurring in the area over the last 30 days.

Story and photos by Spc. Brian Anderson

The 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division, observed by the 4th Brigade Combat Team's Military Integrated Transitional Team, embarked on their largest mission to date, as they conducted a cordon and search of the Al Amarryia neighborhood Sunday.

The 5-6 ID confiscated chemical masks and protective suits and more than 50 AK-47 assault rifles with ammunition during the operation while instilling a sense of security in the residents of the neighborhood.

The joint operation between Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. Troops included the 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, which secured the outer perimeter, while the Iraqi Soldiers conducted the door-to-door searches.

Lt. Col. Gian Gentile, commander, 8-10 CAV, thought the Iraqis did well handling a mission this size for the first time.

"They were able to quickly and effectively mass two battalions into this area, secure it and begin going through homes," Gentile said. "All one has to do is watch them operate and they will

see they are well on their way to becoming an effective security force." The 4th BCT, MITT, injected advice throughout the mission to help ensure success.

"We have been training 5th Brigade for three months, and the 3rd Infantry Division was training them before we took over," said 1st Lt. Andrew Harris, operations, 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, currently attached to 4th BCT in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. "They know what they are doing, so we didn't have to help much.

"Every once and a while we would make an observation, and they would take that and use that to help them run things smoother at the next house," he continued, "but, for the most part, they were on their own."

The 5-6 ID broke up into squad size elements and worked their way through the neighborhood, often stopping for several minutes to answer the questions and concerns of the citizens.

"We have (a lot) of trouble here," said Sahar, a local resident. "It is good that the Iraqi Army is here now."

Sahar described some of the recent

violence that sparked the operation into existence to an Iraqi Soldier.

"We have kids, not much older than (me), running around with guns and threatening the people," she said. "We don't feel safe in our home."

The Iraqi soldiers operated with discipline and professionalism, as they patrolled the streets of Al Amarryia, searching every house they crossed.



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Brian Anderson

Confiscated AK-47 assault rifles are displayed after a joint operation between the 5th Bde. 6th Iraqi Div. and 4th BCT



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Brian Anderson

"This area is very hot," said 1st Lt. Hider Al Asadi, 5-6 ID. "We needed to be very careful, and watch out for each other."

The question ISF heard the most was, "when are we going to have permanent security in our neighborhood?"

The unit already knew the answer and

the reply came easy.

"The 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division is here to support and protect you," officer after officer and Iraqi soldier after soldier would reply.

After telling the residents they will be protected and their neighborhood would be secure, the Iraqi Soldiers

Soldiers in the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division, listens to an Al Amarryia resident express his desire for security in his neighborhood during a cordon and search Sunday. The Iraqi Soldiers, observed by Military Integrated Transitional Teams, lead by the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, confiscated chemical masks and protective suits and more than 50 AK-47 assault rifles with ammunition during the operation. The mission was a response to more than 30 attacks occurring in the area over the last 30 days.

offered cards with contact information, so the Al Amarryia residents would have someone to call if or when an attack occurs in the future.

Al Asadi said the 5-6 ID will continue to train and conduct missions, both joint and independent, in the effort to secure Iraq and root out terrorism.



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

A resident of Al Amarriya discusses security concerns with Iraqi Soldiers patrolling in his neighborhood. The Iraqi Army's 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division participated in a combined operation with the 4th Inf. Div's 4th BCT as part of operations to rout AIF operating during recent months in South Baghdad. The combined operation employed Soldiers of the 4th BCT's 8-10 Cav, working with IA to conduct security operations against AIF operating in South Baghdad.